The Southern PATRIOT

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CITIZENS COUNCILS IN ALL-OUT DRIVE TO OUST NEGRO VOTERS

"The right to cast a ballot of his own choosing is (a white) man's most precious right. Upon this ballot rests all (the white) man's other rights and freedoms. . .

"This opportunity to voice loudly and openly his choice of (white) candidate . . . this right to root vehemently for the (white) man of his choice, is not enjoyed in too many other countries. . .

"Vote for the (white) candidate of your choice. BUT VOTE. Don't pass up your most precious (white) privilege."

The above appeal appeared in the October issue of a fashionable slick magazine—but we have rather sharply changed its tone by inserting the adjective "white" at the key spots.

Unfortunately, in a number of Southern states, that is how the message would read, whether any words were inserted or not.

The Census Bureau has released a survey showing that only 24.3 per cent of the population of voting age in Mississippi participated in the 1952 Presidential election. In Alabama, the per cent was 24.8, in South Carolina, 29.4; in Georgia, 30.5; in Virginia, 31.4. This contrasts sharply with the results in other parts of the country—the three Midwestern states of Indiana, Iowa and Illinois, for example, had 75 per cent turnouts.

The best-ranking of the Deep South states was Louisiana, with 40.3 per cent voting. Significantly, this state was among the first to abolish the poll tax. Covert encouragement from white politicians and numerous federal suits enabled Negroes to register in greater numbers than in any of the neighboring states.

Negro leaders in Louisiana called the situation "critical" as WCC members began a systematic state-wide campaign of challenging voters. As of Oct. 18, a dozen parishes had been "purged." Standing committees of Negro ministers and others were being formed to file counter-affidavits to sustain the challenged voters on the rolls.

It is doubtful that the sorry regional record will be bettered, or even equalled, in this year's election. Most of the activity in the South regarding voting registration has been repressive. In Mississippi the barriers against the Negroes were heightened by new laws. In Alabama, registrars have evaded Negro applicants—in one county, the office was declared vacant. In North Carolina, registrars reportedly are stretching the requirement that a voter must be able to read a portion of the U.S. Constitution. They are also asking Negroes to "interpret" it.

Last month, an assistant U.S. attorney general took cogniance of the attempts Louisiana's White Citizens Councils are making to strike Negro voters from the rolls by filing arbitrary challenges that they are "illegally registered." The official, Warren Olney, told a Senate committee that the number of Negroes registered in two Ouachita Parish wards had dropped from 4,000 to 694 within the past nine months.

The gimmick, which Olney said was being tried in two other parishes and in at least one Georgia county, involves sending challenged voters a demand that they appear within 10 days to prove their qualifications, bringing with them three witnesses who are voters in the same ward. (This scheme was reported on in the SP several months ago. By challenging ALL Negro voters in a ward, none is left able to serve as witness for another.) They are also required to "interpret" the Constitution.

Rev. S. F. Daly of Raleigh, N. C., has declared that "for every obstructionist registrar, there are a hundred Negroes who are not registered because they are afraid or just do not care." He may well be right, in many instances.

But it is hard not to be intimidated or indifferent amid hostile circumstances when the constituted defenders of your "most precious right" are themselves intimidated or indifferent. The Senate Subcommittee on Privileges and Elections heard the evidence of repression in Louisiana.

"However," to quote one news report, "Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), chairman of the subcommittee, placed the responsibility of any future legal action, if any, in the lap of the Justice Department, saying it was too close to the election to hold hearings.

"The Justice Department spokesman said legal action could not be completed before the election."

BIGOTRY CLAIMS GROWING TOLL OF VICTIMS

"Avenge, O Lord, thy martyred saints . . . " Thus begins a powerful sonnet of prayerful anger by John Milton. It fits the Southern scene, as the list of bigotry's victims continues to grow.

The case of Dr. Deborah Coggins, fired as health officer in Florida for eating lunch with a Negro nurse, has been given wide publicity. Despite the support of a local newspaper and of a state health official, she was ousted by the three rural counties she served. A woman school teacher who sided with Mrs. Coggins was also asked to resign her job.

In Mobile, Ala., Mrs. Dorothy D. Daponte, a white woman, attempted to register her Negro ward, Carrie Mae McCants, in a white school. Mrs. Daponte, a socially prominent widow, has traveled widely over the world and her ward received previous education in European schools. She said she did not consider the Negro school suitable for the girl's training.

Her application was refused and a cross was burned on her lawn. Ku Klux Klan members admitted the act, and subsequently the hooded terrorists have been staging parades around Mobile, complete with sheets and hoods but unmasked to comply with state law.

Mrs. Daponte is now reportedly considering court action against the school board. The girl is the daughter of a former servant.

In Gwinett County, Georgia, Mrs. Colleen Marie Wiggins was put under investigation—her salary suspended—by the school board because of pro-integration statements she allegedly made to a class. A petition to the board claimed Mrs. Wiggins told her students that she would not object to teaching mixed classes nor would she interfere, if her daughter wanted to marry a Negro.

Mrs. Wiggins, wife of a Methodist minister, reiterated her beliefs to the press. She is continuing to teach until the board makes a ruling.

In Wheatcroft, Ky., James E. Gordon,

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AMID MISSISSIPPI GLOOM, A COUNTRY EDITOR SHEDS LIGHT

A Mississippi State College sociology professor, Dr. Harold Pederson, has reported that an average of 81,000 persons are leaving the state each year. Most of them are of "working age." And, despite Mississippi's high birth rate, the population in 1960 is likely to be less than it was in 1950.

But the most surprising statistic is that, of these migrants, 40 per cent are white. The wild men of the WCC's are "preserving" a "way of life" that is intolerable to almost as many whites as Negroes.

Mississippi is also experiencing a generally declining economy. The average per capita income (based on a division of total income among every man, woman, and child) is less than a thousand dollars a year. In other Deep South states it ranges from $1,100 to $1,300. Industrial areas elsewhere in the country have averages of over $2,000.

A Mississippi correspondent for **Christian Century** observes: "A considerable share of the state's economic, racial and political problems can be laid to the emigration of the more able and better educated of its people."

However, to put any blame at all on those who have made an exodus is to divert attention from a crucial fact: the economy, and the political structure have been—for decades—based on racial discrimination. Such a negative basis could only cause decline. But, unfortunately, a failure of moral nerve on the part of the rest of the country—a failure that could be said to date back to the administration of Rutherford B. Hayes—has permitted the rule-or-ruin racists to hold sway.

Mississippi voices of protest are isolated by a massively repressive state government and by a passively inept federal establishment.

In this context, the achievement of the **Petal Paper**, edited by P.D. East in Petal Miss., is truly remarkable. This weekly newspaper serves an area in Southeast Mississisppi near Hattiesburg. It not only is critical of the White Citizens Councils, it goes out after them with full-blooded satire. There is, for example, what the editor calls his "jackass page" that he has printed on two occasions. It is pretended advertisement for the WCC—eight columns wide and adorned with a cartoon of a singing donkey. The text reads:

"Suh, here's sweet music! Yes, YOU too, can be SUPERIOR. Join the glorious Citizen's Clan next Thursday Night!

"What? Worried about being socially acceptable? . . . Join the Citizens Clan and be safe from social worries.

"Compare these . . . freedoms with other old-fashioned offers:

"Freedom to interpret the Constitution of the United States to your own personal advantage!

"Freedom to hunt 'Blackbirds' with no bag limit, and without fear of prosecution! (To date no member of the Clan has been convicted for killing a nigger.)

"Freedom to wonder who is pocketing the five dollars you pay to join!

"Freedom to be superior without brain, character, or principle!"

Not resting content with this salvo, Editor East came back later with a four-page parody of a WCC newspaper, called the **Southern Reposure.** It purports to be the organ of the "Anti-Scotch-Irish Council of Mississippi, Ltd.," whose "Grand Imperiad Head Man" is "Nathan Bedford Cooclose."

The paper's columns are filled with the pseudo-scientific gabble and biased news items characteristic of the racist sheets —but all of it directed against the "mongrel scotrash."

Says one letter to the editor: "I do not believe God wants us to mix with the Scotch-Irish, else why did he put them off on a little island by themselves?"

A "Confederate Press Assn." report tells of "the trial of sixteen-year-old Alexander Graham Tell, young Scotch-Irish boy hauled into court for insulting pretty Miss Ruby Hollofield."

A columnist describes the smell, habits and morals of the "average Scottrish." One of the major blemishes laid to the "race" is its pronunciation of "r's."

This satire is maintained, dead-pan, throughout and the effect, is almost painful, so close is its reproduction of the endless rant the WCC's employ. It is deadly, dangerous stuff for white supremacists, because it is likely to start Mississippians to laughing at the violent doctrines their officialdom has been preaching.

It is also very dangerous for the author, personally. But amazingly, the issues of the paper we have seen are quite healthy with advertising — including bank, railroad, and utility ads.

And Editor East is almost jaunty about his activities. He wrote an awed correspondent that "complete independence is almost an obsession" with him. He says he has suffered little harassment. And he appraises the situation as follows:

"I am aware of a liberal movement of a sort here in the state. Unfortunately, those who hold views which I consider fair are afraid to open their mouths. It's still far from safe to say openly that a Negro is a human being and as such, is entitled to the same rights, privileges, and hopes as anyone else.

"In short, there is some conviction in the state, but conviction without courage ain't worth a damned. Of course, they'll hold the hats of anyone who will fight. You see, it only takes two or three to mess up a whole town—and there isn't a town in Mississippi without that two or three."

The 34-year-old Mr. East, a native son, has been publishing for three years, with a circulation of 2,300. To the casual passerby, there could not be a bleaker battleground than Petal. How sad his achievement makes the newspapers look in more prosperous, allegedly more civilized sectors!

WHAT IS THE POLICY OF INSURANCE FIRMS?

Cancellation of insurance has obliged the Montgomery bus boycotters to stop using 17 of the 24 station wagons the churches supporting the protest movement had obtained. They have gone back to employing private cars in the motor pool.

The Rev. Robert Graetz, the young Lutheran minister whose home was bombed in August, has had his auto insurance cancelled by two firms.

In last month's **Patriot**, the embattled residents of Koinonia Farm in Georgia reported how the State Farm Insurance Co. had cancelled their six auto policies.

And we recall how an insurance cancellation complicated the mortgage situation at the Wade house in Louisville, before it was bombed.

The question arises:

Are these cancellations decided upon by local agents or are they ordered by the main offices of the insurance firms?

Gauging from the financial reports of insurance companies generally, it seems they would be able to absorb any claims that might result, without going bankrupt. If the situation looks too risky, this risk is caused by the community itself, not by the targets of lawlessness. Logically, the rates for the entire community should be raised to compensate for the added danger—or do the insurance people work logically any more?

Twenty-one leaders of the Tallahassee bus boycott were fined $500 for operating an illegal transportation system. They are appealing the verdict. The boycott still goes on.

IN KENTUCKY RACIAL INTEGRATION IS STEADY IF NOT SPEEDY

By ANNE BRADEN

School segregation is steadily crumbling in Kentucky. Not as fast as many Kentuckians, Negro and white, who have been working toward a desegregated society would like to see. But certainly not as slowly as the much-publicized disorders at Clay and Sturgis might indicate.

It is fast enough to lead a long-time foe of segregation to remark: "It has come much faster than I ever believed it would. I knew it would come, but I thought I would be an old man when it happened. But I'm far from old, and here it is."

It is estimated that some sort of desegregation plan is under way in 75 percent of the counties having Negro people. The districts affected are in every section of the state, in rural communities, and in virtually all larger cities. This includes Louisville, the first major city south of Mason and Dixon's Line to begin school desegregation at all levels.

The State Board of Education reported that desegregation is under way or planned in 70 per cent of the 106 counties having Negroes of school age. These 106 counties have 177 school districts, of which 62 per cent have adopted a desegregation plan. The districts affected are in every section of the state, in rural communities, and in virtually all larger cities. This includes Louisville, the first major city south of Mason and Dixon's Line to begin school desegregation at all levels.

It cannot be said that every district with a desegregation plan has a great deal of actual integration. In 17 districts, desegregation is still in the planning stage. In some places, only the high schools have been opened; in others, only the elementary, or one or two grades. In some districts, Negro schools have been retained but boards have announced that Negro pupils may transfer to white schools if they wish. In the absence of any strong encouragement, few have done so. In one county, the integration of one Negro pupil in one school district put the whole county in the desegregation column, statistically speaking.

Housing segregation remains a major barrier to full integration. In Lexington, for example, the schools are theoretically desegregated but only 36 of the 2,900 Negroes are in integrated schools.

There are other districts where desegregation is more extensive. In at least one Eastern Kentucky mountain county, the white school was closed and the pupils enrolled in the previously all-Negro school.

But the most important fact, the most dramatic one, is that in a state where compulsory school segregation was the law until the Supreme Court decision in 1954, there are classrooms all over the state where Negro and white children study together. The old pattern has been broken and the sky has not fallen in. Except for three places in Western Kentucky—Clay, Sturgis and Henderson—the change has taken place without major incidents. (In Sturgis and Clay, there was mob action to bar enrollment of Negro students. In Henderson, a white boycott of a mixed school was 75 per cent effective at one point but was finally defeated through decisive community action. Details will be in next month's Patriot.)

Progress toward school integration results basically from efforts of many people and organizations against the whole pattern of segregation in recent years. The segregated structure has been gradually chippd away—in colleges, hospitals, libraries and public facilities, especially in cities such as Louisville. Such efforts were generally initiated by the Negro people—whose voice is strong in Kentucky because their vote can be decisive—but more and more white people gave support as time went on.

In 1954, three months before the decision in the school segregation cases, support of desegregation of elementary and secondary schools was displayed at a public hearing before the state legislature. Negro and labor leaders, college students, parents, educators and ministers from over the state urged complete repeal of segregation laws. An SCEF board member, Dr. M.M.D. Perdue of Louisville, was an organizer of this movement (**Southern Patriot**, March, 1954).

The earlier steps toward desegregation made it almost inevitable that state officials would announce compliance with the Supreme Court decision on the schools; they did so soon after the ruling. There was also intense opposition to integration, and White Citizens Councils have been spreading. However, the state's official position for compliance provided a framework in which the forces of decency could operate. There have been no legislative sessions to try to circumvent the Supreme Court ruling.

Even after the state announced its position, it took considerable effort by the Negro people and white liberals to get desegregation plans into operation on the local level. For example; in Louisville,

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LOUISIANA PRIEST BLASTS RACIST LAWYERS

The Roman Catholic Church in Louisiana continues to yield no ground in its condemnation of racial segregation.

Among those laymen who have defied Archbishop Joseph Rummel's decrees are two lawyers: Emile A. Wagner, who once attempted to organize a Catholic WCC, and Leander Perez, longtime Dixiecrat. On Oct. 1, the Rev. William J. Kenealy, professor of law at Loyola University, spelled out the church's position for these and other members of the legal profession at the annual "Red Mass" conducted especially for lawyers. (The ceremony derives its name from the color of the vestments.)

Father Kenealy said: "Without question, there is an alarming danger in the current controversy (over segregation). That danger, however, does not arise from freedom of speech, but rather from a grave threat to its exercise. That threat, as it becomes daily more evident, consists in the ominous climate of fear, produced by intemperate partisanship and unrestrained passion, and penetrating into the home, the office . . . and even the church. The fear, I mean, in the hearts of many citizens, and not a few of the legal profession, who have honest and reasoned opinions about segregation, but who are afraid . . . to express them, lest they or their families suffer unjust political, economic, professional or social reprisals. I sympathize sincerely with their fear; but I admire all the more those who have had the fortitude to speak . . . The success of the democratic process is predicated upon intelligent conviction courageously expressed.

"The obligations of loyal obedience to the Supreme Court does not preclude, of course, honest and reasonable efforts to reverse its decisions by the **lawful process** of constitutional amendment defined in Article V of the Constitution. But it does preclude the employment of tactics of evasion and defiance, based on obsolete and unconstitutional theories of interposition and nullification.

"Where, for example, is the loyal obedience of the lawyer who would counsel, encourage, persuade or incite his fellow citizens to violate the supreme law of the land? Where is the loyal obedience of the lawyer who would lend the skill of his draftsmanship . . . to the enactment of a statute which he **knows** to be unconstitutional and which provides criminal penalties against citizens who desire

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